

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-10

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FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7940

S E C R E T MADRID 632

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR SP US

SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH FOREIGN MINISTER

1. DURING MY COURTESY CALL TODAY ON FOREIGN MINISTER CORTINA, HE MADE SOME COMMENTS WHICH GIVE SOME INTERESTING INSIGHTS INTO HIS OWN THINKING, AND PROBABLY THAT OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT TEAM, ON THE CURRENT STATE AND FUTURE DIRECTION OF SPANISH-U.S. RELATIONS.

2. CORTINA EMPHASIZED THE THEME THAT THE U.S. SHOULD CONSIDER SPAIN THE PIVOTAL POINT OF ITS RELATIONS WITH EUROPE. SPAIN, HE NOTED, WAS NOT ONLY LINKED TO THE U.S. BY ITS PAST CONTRIBUTIONS TO U.S. HISTORY BUT ALSO WAS OF CRUCIAL STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE BECAUSE OF ITS LOCATION AT THE CROSSROADS OF THE ATLANTIC AND THE MEDITERRANEAN. MOREOVER, SPAIN'S IMPORTANCE IN SUPPORT OF THE U.S. WAS ENHANCED BY THE FACT THAT IT WAS REMOVED FROM THE GEOGRAPHIC LINE OF CONFRONTATION BETWEEN EAST AND WEST. THE OTHER WEST EUROPEAN COUNTRIES, ON THE OTHER HAND, BEING SO CLOSE TO THE EAST-WEST DIVIDING LINE, WERE MORE SUSCEPTIBLE TO EASTERN PRESSURES AND THEREFORE TENDED TO HAVE A PSYCHOLOGY OF ACCOMMODATION. (COMMENT: THE IMPLICATION HERE SEEMED TO BE THAT SPAIN IS A MORE RELIABLE PARTNER FOR THE U.S. THAN OTHER WEST EUROPEAN COUNTRIES.)

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HE SAID FRANCE'S ACTIONS REFLECT A GENERAL EUROPEAN ATTITUDE,

IN THIS RESPECT. THE FOREIGN MINISTER EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT SPAIN WOULD RECEIVE TREATMENT CONSONANT WITH ITS POSITION AND IMPORTANCE. HE DID NOT BELIEVE THAT THE U.S. WAS ACCORDING SPAIN THE MEASURE OF IMPORTANCE WARRANTED BY SPAIN'S CONTRIBUTIONS AND STATUS AS A MAJOR EUROPEAN POWER. HE ACKNOWLEDGED THE ROLE PLAYED BY THE U.S. IN BRINGING SPAIN OUT OF ITS ISOLATION IN THE EARLY 1950'S, AGREED THAT SPAIN'S RAPID DEVELOPMENT OF THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS REQUIRED AN ADJUSTMENT IN OUTSIDE THINKING ABOUT SPAIN, AND APPRECIATED THE SENTIMENTS EXPRESSED BY PRESIDENT NIXON CONCERNING THE STATUS OF SPAIN AS A MAJOR EUROPEAN POWER. HOWEVER, HE EMPHASIZED IT WAS NOW NECESSARY TO GIVE CONCRETE EXPRESSION TO SPAIN'S INCREASED IMPORTANCE. IF THE U.S. TOOK AN APPROACH ALONG THESE LINES, WEST EUROPEAN COUNTRIES WOULD BE INFLUENCED TO TREAT SPAIN ACCORDINGLY.

4. IN THIS REGARD, CORTINA NOTED THE APPROACH MADE BY AMBASSADOR SAGAZ IN WASHINGTON REQUESTING THAT SPAIN BE INVITED TO ATTEND THE FEBRUARY 11 ENERGY CONFERENCE (STATE 16492). HE SAID THE ARGUMENT MIGHT BE MADE THAT IT WOULD BE BETTER FOR SPAIN NOT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE INITIAL SUCH CONFERENCE BECAUSE OF ITS RELATIONS WITH THE ARAB COUNTRIES. HOWEVER, THE TREATMENT OF SPAIN ON A LEVEL WITH OTHER MAJOR WEST EUROPEAN POWERS WAS A CONSIDERATION OF GREATER IMPORTANCE. HE DID NOT THINK THAT THIS FACTOR HAD BEEN GIVEN SUFFICIENT WEIGHT IN THE RESPONSE MADE BY THE STATE DEPARTMENT TO AMBASSADOR SAGAZ' APPROACH.

5. WHEN I TOLD CORTINA HOW IMPRESSED I WAS WITH THE FEELING OF AFFECTION FOR THE U.S. THAT I HAD ENCOUNTERED BOTH AMONG OFFICIALS AND ORDINARY PEOPLE IN MY TRAVELS THROUGH ALL OF SPAIN'S PROVINCES, HE COMMENTED THAT HE KNEW SUCH A FEELING TO EXIST AND THAT IT WAS LONGSTANDING. HE AGREED THAT IT WAS OF THE GREATEST IMPORTANCE TO DEVELOP SPANISH-U.S. COOPERATION IN NON-MILITARY FIELDS. IN THIS REGARD, HE GAVE PARTICULAR EMPHASIS TO TECHNOLOGICAL AND EDUCATION EXCHANGES.

6. I DID NOT USE THIS OCCASION TO RAISE THE QUESTION OF FUEL SUPPLIES TO U.S. NAVY SHIPS (MADRID 509) BECAUSE OF RECENT INFORMATION, THAT I WOULD LIKE TO CONFIRM, THAT AN ARRANGEMENT
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IS BEING MADE FOR CAMPSA TO BEGIN SUPPLYING THE FUEL OIL BEING DRAWN BY THE SPANISH NAVY FROM U.S. DEPOTS IN SPAIN.

7. CORTINA WAS WARM AND GENIAL THROUGHOUT OUR CONVERSATION. HE ARTICULATED HIS THOUGHTS CLEARLY, RAPIDLY, AND WITH GREAT ANIMATION AND VIGOR. THE SENTIMENTS HE EXPRESSED OF FRIENDSHIP TOWARD THE U.S. SEEMED TO CARRY CONVICTION.

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